in Bosnia-Herzegovina; a focus on a few sites of memory or a stricter chronological framework would have strengthened the author's arguments.

As mentioned earlier, the book suffers from the lack of a more cohesive theoretical approach which could have been laid out in an introductory and comparative chapter. Moreover, despite being inherently comparative because of its analysis of three ex-Yugoslav countries, there is little reference to comparative memory politics in other parts of Europe. For example, Govedarica's discussion of the impact of the Škorpioni video depicting the murders of Bosniak civilians could have parallels with the role of documentaries and films in opening the dark sides of the World War Two past in Western European countries in the 1960s and 1970s. There is also considerable room for comparative analysis with other former communist countries and how their memory politics differ from or resemble those in the Yugoslav successor states, especially the Baltic countries or Hungary which are also dealing with the legacies of fascist collaborators up to the present day. While the chapter on Serbia brings up the role of victims (and auto-victimization) in the discourse of the past, a greater emphasis and reflection on this phenomenon throughout the book would have represented a significant contribution to the field. Despite a few rough edges, the volume is a valuable addition to the body of work dealing with the culture of memory in the former Yugoslavia, and one hopes a starting point for further research endeavors.

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Review

## Véronique Pin-Fat
## **Universality, Ethics and International Relations: a Grammatical Reading**

Routledge, London and New York, 2010, 157 pp.

The book *Universality, Ethics and International Relations: a Grammatical Reading* by Véronique Pin-Fat presents an interesting hermeneutical journey into the unsolvable philosophical issue of ethics and universal human rights in global politics. Thus, for students of International Relations theory (especially the normative wing dealing with ethics in IR) this book is a must-read.

The central theme of the book is what the author calls a "metaphysical seduction" of IR scholars, who are seduced by the search for eternal universal standards of ethics. They use specific words forming a distinctive grammar to explain their respective theories. It is precisely the author's intervention into these grammars that makes this book an original contribution to IR theory. The author tends to investigate the grammatical "digging" of IR scholars beneath the surface of the perceptive reality of international politics. In other words (as the author explains in chapter 1 relying on the interpretations of Ludwig Wittgenstein) the words that we use to name objects do not necessarily refer to the nature of objects themselves,

but rather to the meaning we subjectively give to these objects. The book concludes that the outcome is an overall failure: seeking answers to eternal questions of universal ethics remains impossible. The idea of universality remains distant – a pure object of theoretical desire.

The IR scholars in question are Hans Morgenthau (a realist approach to universality, chapter 3); Charles R. Beitz (a cosmopolitan approach, chapter 4); and Michael Walzer (a communitarian approach, chapter 5). By focusing on these three distinctive theoretical traditions of IR theory, the author in the final chapter 6 concludes that there is no "common" universality. Rather, we are looking at a family of different universalities.

Even though this book is an important contribution to the normative study of IR theory, one critical point should be addressed – the selection criterion of the three scholars. All three may come from a different theoretical tradition (realist, cosmopolitan and communitarian), however, they do share the same theoretical background of the American IR science, which has often been criticized for being exclusively empirical and positivistic. This becomes evident in chapter 2 in which the author discusses the issue of the ontological disjunction between domestic and international politics, which is specific for the American scientific culture in IR. It would have been interesting to see how the author explains the "metaphysical seduction" of Hedley Bull (or R.J. Vincent for that matter) and the overall English School's "Grotian tradition" (i.e. Bull's concept of an "international society of states", which explicitly emphasizes the dominant role of the "whole" (norms, values, culture) over its "parts" (the states)).

The "divine universality" of Morgenthau the author locates in his separation of thought (*via contemplative*) and action (*via active*). This distinction in Morgenthau's work is synthesized through what he calls a "creative middle" – a middle between the will to live (actual) and the will to know (divine). In the context of IR, the creative middle reflects society's effort in acquiring metaphysical knowledge of morals and applying them in real world politics. For Morgenthau, gaining such divine knowledge means knowing how to formulate "national interests". This is the part in Morgenthau's grammar where the author objects. The national interest of the state is prone to change, so the question remains – how can the universal moral standard, eternal by its nature, be applied to the politics in the specific place and time of the "historical" state?

The "cosmopolitan universality" of Beitz, heavily reliant on John Rawls's influential book *A Theory of Justice*, draws an analogy between the concepts of Rawls's intrastate distributive justice and justice in the global order. Beitz is here primarily focused on the ideal theory of cosmopolitan universal morality. The idea would apparently come into practice through what Beitz calls "natural duty", which according to him states and societies are supposed to be aware of. From the analysis of Beitz's work, the author located two major problems in his grammar. First, his overall emphasis on the ideal theory completely rejects the non-ideal real world of politics; and secondly, Beitz does not seem to be able to bridge the gap between

domestic and international politics. As with Morgenthau, the author seeks to explain the grammatical problems of Beitz who does not overcome the disjunction in the dualistic IR picture of domestic and international politics.

The third and final concept is the "binary universality" of Walzer. This theoretical aspect on universal ethics comes through communitarian lenses. For Walzer, despite his particularistic notions in IR, universality indeed exists: first is the "thin" universality of strangers, and second is the "thick" universality of members. Basically, this binary characteristic of Walzer's universality – thick and thin – refers to the question of when and how should certain countries intervene in other countries in order to preserve a just global order. What the author suggests is that Walzer's grammar is entrapped by his own wishful thinking – his desire to fatten up the thin. Again, as in Morgenthau's and Beitz's case, it is just the theoretical desire to see a universal ethic function in a state-centered conception.

By specifically focusing on American scholarship and avoiding the international law tradition in IR, the author intentionally does not want to enter a theoretical discussion, but narrows her study exclusively to "language games". Pin-Fat constantly reminds us that her objective in this book is not to offer her theoretical view on the subject, not to deal with the three IR scholars intellectually and that this book is not about seeking the proper concept of universality at all. Even so, her in-depth reading of three distinct approaches offers much more to the study of ethics and universality in IR than just a simple deconstruction of the grammar. By deconstructing the three scholars' metaphysics, the book opens many new perspectives. Thus, this book is at the same time satisfactory and disappointing for being too short; it should have encompassed a larger body of literature in IR scholarship.

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Review

## Jon Meacham
## **Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power**

Random House, New York, 2012, 800 pp.

Jon Meacham, author and executive editor at Random House, has earned a reputation with books on American and British political history, which include *American Gospel: God, the Founding Fathers, and the Making of a Nation* and *Franklin and Winston: An Intimate Portrait of an Epic Friendship*. He won the Pulitzer Prize for his account of the life of the seventh US president *American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House*. Although neither a historian nor a political scientist (he is a journalist with a degree in English literature, earned at the University of the South), Meacham has a good feel for meticulous archival work, but also for political analysis and contextualization. His new book is a complex and profound political biography of Thomas Jefferson, a man often surrounded with mystery and controversy and a political leader whose